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# VOICES



Through our City Committee page at [nuvo.net](http://nuvo.net) we've been asking readers to identify question about Indianapolis we can answer.

Our first entry of questions resulted in a voting round of three great reader questions:

How much more money from the state does Hamilton County (Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville) get per lane mile of roads versus Indianapolis/ Marion County? They can't build roads / roundabouts fast enough while Indy is pothole hell.

How about a story highlighting the rise of women to positions of power in politics? For example, Susan Brooks in Congress, Karlee Macer and Connie Lawson at the Statehouse, and Maggie Lewis at the City County level. Is Indiana seeing the same wave of women happening in other parts of the country?

My questions are about Indianapolis migration trends within I-465. Is the downtown housing boom sustainable? How many racial and economic minorities are being forced out? Where are they going? I'd like to see a story focused on answering these questions.

The winning question was the last one, about migration trends caused by the current housing boom downtown, with 53 percent of the vote. News Editor Rob Burgess is ready to dive in and find the answers. Look for the resulting story in March.

If you'd like help collaborate on this story, if you live in an affected area or have expertise that could help the reporting process, reach out to Rob at [rburgess@nuvo.net](mailto:rburgess@nuvo.net), and help tell the story. This is a collaborative process, and we want your input.

We'll also start another round of voting this with more reader-submitted story ideas and ways for you to weigh in on our coverage and be a part of the stories we are telling.

Cast your vote now at [nuvo.net/citycommittee](http://nuvo.net/citycommittee).

*Laura McPhee*

Laura McPhee  
NUVO Editor

# Q & A WITH GREG BALLARD

## Former Mayor Makes National Security Case for Moving Away from Oil

BY **ROB BURGESS** // RBURGESS@NUVO.NET



THE FORMER MAYOR VISITED NUVO HQ ON FEB.5 // PHOTO BY MERCER T. SUPPGER

**W**hen he was serving in the United States Marine Corps in the Gulf War, Greg Ballard was fighting to maintain the global economic order.

Now, almost three decades later, he hopes to be at the forefront of changing it.

At the start of the new year, the Republican former Indianapolis mayor published his new book, *Less Oil or More Caskets: The National Security Argument for Moving Away From Oil*, through IU Press.

Ballard spent 23 years in the Marines, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He served as the city's 48th mayor from 2008 to 2016. He is currently a Visiting Fellow for Civic Leadership and Mayoral Archives at the University of Indianapolis. Last month, he became the campaign chairman for Republican mayoral hopeful Jim Merritt.

Ballard stopped by the NUVO office last week to discuss his views on oil, national security, and how it feels to be a Republican arguing for alternative energy.

The following conversation has been edited for space and clarity.

**NUVO:** Why did you decide to focus on the national security argument for getting away from oil? I know you're a Marine Corps veteran, of course, but there's plenty of environmental reasons.

**BALLARD:** I wanted people to realize there's not just an environmental argument, that there's a real national security argument associated with what we're doing. And, I would not have written this book unless I thought there was a solution on the horizon. I'm not just complaining. As a Marine you learn not to complain unless you have a better solution. You have to have the answer to it, and I think the answer is kind of staring us in the face right now. We just need to embrace it.

**NUVO:** You talk a little bit in the book about what would happen if we moved away from oil for transportation, as far as the Middle East's economy. What do you see replacing that?

**BALLARD:** Clearly there would be social unrest, and they would have to diversify their economies. The Saudis realize this is coming, and they are diversifying.

Iran is going to have to figure out what to do, they've been sponsoring terrorism for a long

time now. There are other countries that we'd have to help them figure it out. But, it's going to take time. If you started today, I think in 10 years we'd start making a difference. In 20 years, we could probably accomplish the mission.

But, I don't think it's our troops' responsibility, I don't think it's the responsibility of U.S. taxpayers. I don't want social unrest, I don't want all that. But there's a lot of social unrest there now with oil.

**NUVO:** You talk a little bit about wars and conflicts we've had over the last 50 years that were maybe directly affected by this oil situation. But, what is our military responsibility to the Middle East absent oil?

**BALLARD:** The only reason we're in there is of oil. The military gets this. The senior levels of the military understands this completely, but they are subservient, as they should be, to the civilian government. But, they know what's happening. There's just no question that they know what's happening.

**NUVO:** Do you get resistance from other Republicans to these ideas?

**BALLARD:** We have to make oil what I call an industrial lubricant, not a critical strategic commodity for the world. Seventy percent of the world's oil is used for transportation. This is clear. And, now we have a transportation alternative, we should be sprinting towards that alternative.

A lot of people say, "We're producing so much oil right now, there's no reason to change." But that's not the point. It doesn't take away the strategic leverage that Russia and OPEC have over the rest of the world; and producing our own oil doesn't bring our troops home from the Middle East and doesn't stop us from spending \$81 billion to protect the flow of oil for the entire world.

We will continue to do that because it's part of our international security missions. We will continue to do that no matter whether we produce our own oil or not. And, like I say, it doesn't defund terrorism. It doesn't really do what we want it to do.

The assumption is we don't need to deal with these countries anymore. But, we do. We do, and we will continue to do that as long as oil is absolutely critical to the economies of most of the world, and that's what has to change. **N**

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A close-up photograph of a dark-colored bowl filled with creamy hummus. Several golden-brown, triangular pita chips are scattered around the bowl on a dark wooden surface. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures of the hummus and the chips.

# THE POLITICS OF HUMMUS

*Jewish Voice For Peace and Allies Create Alternative Interfaith Spaces*

BY DAN GROSSMAN // [DGROSSMAN@NUVO.NET](mailto:DGROSSMAN@NUVO.NET)

**Y**ou might not think of politics when buying a tub of hummus at the supermarket or when making it at home with your preferred proportions of chickpeas, garlic, tahini, and lemon.

But hummus can inspire debate. That is because it's a traditional Palestinian food that has become everyday cuisine in Israel. Like just about everything else the two peoples share, it has become fodder for contention.

A recent local food fight, as it were—such disputes arise regularly around the U.S.—occurred at a hummus tasting event during the November 2018 Spirit & Place Festival. The event, co-sponsored by the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council wasn't the first interfaith conversation to become contentious, and it wasn't the first to leave members of groups with left-of-center views regarding Israel/Palestine feeling excluded.

As a result, the Muslim Youth Collective, American Friends Service Committee, and Jewish Voice for Peace are now joining together to create alternative interfaith events not only for breaking bread, but also for prayer and politics. This includes a monthly interfaith shabbat service that debuted in January 2019, and is described by organizers as “non-Zionist.”

It also includes community events like *Hanukkah and the Politics of Food*, which took place on Dec. 3, 2018 at The Church Within. The evening started with discussion, followed by a Hanukkah singalong, meno-

rah lighting, and a potluck with Jewish and Palestinian dishes.

## **POLITICS AND FOOD**

“What we're hoping to do tonight is, number one, celebrate Hanukkah,” said Malkah Bird of Jewish Voice for Peace during the Politics of Food event. “We at JVP are always looking for ways to do Jewish stuff and be in community with Jewish people and non-Jewish people without having to be in spaces that are explicitly Zionist spaces.”

Bird's comment reflects JVP guiding principles that state Judaism, or being Jewish, is not synonymous with Zionism or support for Israel.

It's a principle supported by another attendee that evening, Muslim Youth Collective co-founder Umaymah Mohammad who sees a built-in bias to many interfaith conversations and events.

“Zionism or pro-Israeli or whiteness isn't seen as political, but brownness and blackness is seen as political,” she says.

*Hanukkah and the Politics of Food* was organized in response to the Spirit & Place Festival hummus tasting event called *Hummus and Happiness* that took place a month earlier.

Held at the Indiana Interchurch Center on Nov. 5, 2018, the Spirit & Place event was presented by the Muslim Alliance of Indiana, CANDLES Holocaust Museum, the Center for Interfaith Cooperation, and

Jewish Community Relations Council.

Lindsey Mintz, executive director of the JCRC, describes the genesis of the event *Hummus and Happiness*:

“Several times a year, CANDLES takes a delegation to Poland to travel to Auschwitz, Jewish communities, and other concentration camps with [Holocaust survivor] Eva Kor,” she says.

One stop on that trip is a restaurant in Krakow, Poland called *Hummus and Happiness*. The city had a large Jewish population, pre-World War II, murdered by Nazis during the Holocaust. The Jewish owner of the restaurant stayed in Krakow to, in Mintz's words, “bring people together.”

## **THE JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS**

The core mission of the Indianapolis JCRC, according to its website, is “to safeguard Jews here in the U.S., in Israel, and around the world, by combating anti-Semitism through relationship-building and education.”

The JCRC frequently builds relationships with like-minded partners, advocating for progressive causes like hate crimes legislation, in addition to responding to anti-Semitic acts in the community.

The JCRC also sides with some Muslim groups on local issues. Last year, they released a statement expressing support for the Al Salam Foundation's push to build a mosque in Carmel, for example. But, this bridge-building does not extend to Palestin-

ian Muslims' political aspirations.

That is, they generally support the current Israeli government in their position statements. They keep watch on pro-Palestinian activism on local university campuses and criticize some of that activity.

But the JCRC's having a different point of view with the Muslim Alliance of Indiana on the Trump administration's 2017 decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, for example, didn't prevent them from partnering to present *Hummus & Happiness*.

“With the Intersection theme of Spirit & Place and CANDLES [it was] the perfect time to do the hummus-making competition and a movie and have people of all different backgrounds together sharing their stories,” says Muslim Alliance executive director Aliya Amin. “Food brings everyone to the table.”

The goal of the evening, according to Mintz, was not political in nature.

“Everything is political,” she says. “So we knew that had to be a thread that was acknowledged and honored but it was not the goal to have a conversation about the political complexities on the ground in Israel or Palestine today.”

## **HUMMUS AND UNHAPPINESS**

Originally, the *Hummus and Happiness* event was meant to include a screening of the documentary *Hummus the Movie*.

While the event was in planning, Erin Polley, program coordinator of the Indiana

**WHAT** // Shabbat for All — Angela Davis Solidarity Shabbat  
**WHEN** // 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 15  
**WHERE** // The Church Within, 1125 Spruce St.  
**TICKETS** // **FREE**, but you are encouraged to bring a dish to share

Peacebuilding Program for AFSC, saw the trailer for *Hummus the Movie* and noticed it included a map that showed the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as indistinct from Israel.

Polley brought the map issue to Charlie Wiles, executive director for the Center for Interfaith Cooperation, a co-sponsor of the event.

“We took that back to the committee, and we looked at it and agreed [it was problematic],” says Wiles. The JCRC and the Muslim Alliance of Indiana also concurred that the suggested film was problematic, and a different film was chosen.

But when *Life and Hummus*, a documentary following a young Jewish American filmmaker through Israel and the occupied West Bank in a quest to find the best hummus, was screened at the Spirit & Place event, reactions were not all charitable.

“The [replacement] film might have been more biased but it wasn’t disingenuous,” says Wiles. “It was a young Jewish kid from L.A. who wanted to go over there and learn ...”

Polley, for one, feels that Palestinians get short shrift in the documentary.

“The whole movie is about hummus,” she says. “[The young filmmaker] goes to the West Bank to try hummus during Ramadan when all the shops are closed and never tries any Palestinian hummus. He interviews Palestinians; there’s some Arabs in Jaffa [in Israel] that work at jobs that he interviews as well. But they’re identified as Arabs, not Palestinians.”

During the screening, there was chatter in the audience that reflected the discomfort with the film.

“Several members of JVP were there,” says Mintz. “AFSC—they made their concerns very clear by passing out materials during [the movie] and by making some event goers uncomfortable in speaking throughout

the movie and making comments.”

AFSC’s Polley confirms that her group had leaflets available during the event, and several people were wearing shirts reading “Leave Hummus Alone.”

“There are two people who work with JVP and AFSC; an Israeli man and a Palestinian woman,” says Polley. “As they were watching the film, they were commenting on things they were seeing. Because it’s in Israel and Palestine, they were commenting on places where they lived and visited. It wasn’t a planned sort of disruption; it was just them talking.

“But it agitated Lindsey [Mintz] very much,” Polley says. “And she was talking to people around them, asking them if they wanted to move.”

#### RESPECTFUL CONVOS OR FAITHWASHING?

The rift between some organizations and the Jewish Community Relations Council stems from profound differences with the JCRC over Israel.

JVP, MYC, and AFSC all support the Palestinian-led Boycott Divest Sanctions movement. The goal of BDS is to inflict various forms of boycott against Israel until it ends its occupations of Arab lands, grants equal rights to Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, dismantles the separation wall, and allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Israel.

On Feb. 5, the U.S. Senate passed the Combating BDS Act, a measure that encourages states to allow economic punishment of those who support boycotting Israel.

The Jewish Community Relations Council opposes BDS which they believe aims to undermine the legitimacy of Israel.

“There’s nothing [we] could do to that would pass muster,” says Mintz. “If we have an event that does not meet their organizations’ goals or missions, then it’s not going to be satisfactory.”

Polley acknowledges the efforts made by the JCRC and others in trying to find common ground, but remains critical of what she sees as the silencing of views that don’t fall in line with those held by the JCRC.

“When you say you want it to exclude politics,” says Polley, “you’re essentially silencing a voice of people who feel like

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hummus is very political and has been culturally-appropriated, and there's a lot of history behind that."

And Polley has a term for this.

"I think there was sort of a faith washing over this conversation about hummus," she says. "Using hummus as a way to normalize this Israeli culture and [present it as] this beautiful thing everyone can come around and experience together."

Polley went on to express some frustration with feeling excluded from the wider faith community, although AFSC has partnered with CIC and Muslim Alliance in the past.

"Muslim Youth Collective, American Friends Service Committee, and Jewish Voice for Peace are faith organizations also, and we are connecting with people of faith," she says.

"We have a different perspective than the Center for Interfaith Cooperation, the JCRC and the Muslim Alliance, but in the spirit of being inclusive and having real interfaith conversations, why aren't we invited to the table?"

Malkah Bird says JVP, a national organization with several hundred on its e-mail list locally, is seeing more people of Jewish background at events they help organize.

"There were more Jews than when we started," she says. "And part of the reason why we're creating Jewish spaces is because there are lots of unaffiliated Jews who don't actually feel like they have a space in the mainstream Jewish community."

### SHABBAT FOR ALL

The first monthly interfaith Shabbat For All took place on Jan. 25 at The Church Within, and will repeat at this location on a monthly basis. There were approximately 40 participants, both Jews and non-Jews.

There was a short evening service, marking the commencement of Shabbat



(LEFT) MALKAH BIRD LIGHTS A MENORAH DURING HANUKKAH AND THE POLITICS OF FOOD EVENT. (RIGHT) Umaymah Mohammad speaks at the June 2018 Nakba Day Vigil on Monument Circle. // PHOTOS BY DAN GROSSMAN

with the Niggun, or welcoming song, followed by a pitch-in dinner. Attending the service were both Erin Polley and Umaymah Mohammad, whose organizations were cosponsors of this event along with Jewish Voice for Peace.

Darren Chittick, reverend at The Church Within, says that the Israel/Palestine conflict wasn't on his radar until he heard Malkah Bird speak at an event.

The fact that the conflict in the Middle East is complex does not intimidate Chittick, and he decided to make space in his church for events such as Hanukkah and the Politics of Food and Shabbat for All.

"For me the, idea that there's no way to be supportive of the Palestinian people without being considered anti-Semitic doesn't make sense," he says.

"And so when I started reading more about JVP and what they were doing, learning from Malkah and Mark, I realized this is information that we need to be processing and being exposed to."

At the Shabbat dinner, Jewish Voice for Peace chapter leader Mark Sniderman gave a talk on Zionism and why JVP was creating alternate spaces. Sniderman co-founded

the Indiana Chapter of JVP in 2014, in the aftermath of the Operation Protective Edge incursion into Gaza.

This conflict left 1,483 Palestinian civilians dead, including more than 500 children, according to the UN. Five Israeli civilians were also killed, including one child, by rocket attacks from Palestinian groups in Gaza during this period. The disproportionate civilian casualties in Palestine—and particularly the deaths of children in the conflict—distressed Sniderman, a married father of two.

Previously, he co-founded J Street in 2008, a liberal Jewish organization dedicated to a peaceful two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. During the time he was still on the JCRC board.

A member of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, Sniderman was surprised by pushback from the organized Jewish community.

"They viewed J Street as a mortal threat for many reasons," he says. "One: you're not supposed to criticize Israel out loud. Jew to Jew, it's permitted, and has been for a long time, but this has been one debate in the Jewish community that's got



a pedigree. Jew to Jew yes, but the other people won't understand. We can't weaken Israel by having this argument out loud."

He resigned the JCRC on Oct. 17, 2011, "after years of cognitive dissonance and reflection," he says.

Previously, he thought that a two-state solution was possible, per the 1993 Oslo Agreement. But his hope began to erode as Israeli politics drifted to the right—along with the positions of the JCRC, he says.

As a liberal Zionist, he had needed to believe in a two-state solution. Once that belief was gone, he says, he could no longer be a liberal Zionist, or a J Street organizer.

He sees his work with JVP in keeping with his Judaism. "This is what Jewish principle commands us to do," he says.

It's a sentiment shared by JVP's Malkah Bird, who grew up in a conservative Detroit Jewish congregation and says when she moved to Indianapolis, she wanted to provide Jewish community for her children.

"I started looking around at the different options, the synagogues and the JCC realizing that they were Jewish spaces but they were deeply Zionist. You walk down the hallway at the Jewish Community Center, for example, and there's an entire hallway lined with Israeli flags," says Bird.

"I just wanted Judaism for my kids that was not a Zionist Judaism."

Together, Bird, Polley, Sniderman and other allies are working to make that type of Jewish experience available to disaffected Jews and others, and to make the interfaith community in Indianapolis more inclusive and more politically aware.

And whether such experiences include a Hanukkah celebration or a shabbat service, there will almost certainly be hummus on the table. ■



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## BEER & BALLET V

FEB. 15-16

BALLET THEATRE OF INDIANA AT THE ATHENAEUM

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## LOVE IS IN THE AIR: PAQUITA AND CARMEN

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It's Valentine's Day and Indianapolis ballet is presenting their Valentine's Day weekend residency including the ballets Paquita Grand Pas Classique, The Hunt, Dance of the Hours, and Carmen. Carmen was originally choreographed as a full ballet in 1846 for the Paris Opera while The Hunt was choreographed just a tad more recently, taking its soundtrack from the 2001 film *Planet of the Apes*. But, as we shouldn't have to tell you, love is a timeless thing.



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INDIANA STATE MUSEUM

You don't usually get to see fossils and minerals in your typical diamond showroom, but that's what you'll get to see, and shop, at GeoFest during this weekend festival. Jewelry cut, and uncut gemstones from all over the world will also be for sale. You can become a rock star by carving limestone and meet local artists and rock experts. Free with admission.



## INDY SOUL SUNDAYS

FEB. 17

GROVE HAUS

Listen to some soul classics and deep cuts by DJ Rusty Redenbacher while chowing down on some expertly prepared dishes by Chef Lance George. But, that's not all: you can be enlightened by the positivity of singer/songwriter Yadin Kol, be provoked by spoken word stylings of Jus Will, and have your auditory canals massaged by Clint Breeze and the Groove. 2-5:30 p.m. Tickets \$10; if you get tickets before Feb. 17 you get a complimentary beer, wine, or mixed drink with admission.



## THE MOVEMENT

FEB. 20

HI-FI

Here's one for all of you reggae fans who are nostalgic about post-punk circa 1990. The Movement was formed by three dudes who shared an affinity for the Pixies and Sublime. The first album *On Your Feet*, has been hailed as one of the top reggae rock albums of all time. Their album *Golden* hit No.1 on iTunes and the Billboard reggae charts. Doors 8 p.m. \$15.



## THAT PEACE OPEN MIC

FEB. 21

CENTRAL LIBRARY

Every third Thursday, That Peace Open Mic occupies the Center for Black Literature and Culture at Central Library. This month the feature artist is Richard Bowman. That PEACE provides opportunities for just about all genres of performances, provides they "share in GOOD INNERGY." The monthly, under-21-friendly event is produced by spoken word artist Mariah Ivey. Doors 7 p.m., performance 7:30 p.m., suggested donation \$7.



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FEB. 22

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## MUSEUM BY MOONLIGHT

FEB. 23

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FEB. 24

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# 'ROMA' AND THE MALE GAZE

*The Problem with Alfonso Cuarón Orozco's Cinematic Masterpiece*

BY LAURA MCPHEE // LMCPEE@NUVO.NET

First, and foremost, *Roma* is a cinematic masterpiece. From beginning to end, Alfonso Cuarón Orozco creates one of the most beautiful, compelling, and artistic films you are likely to ever see. And see it, you should.

The film earns praise like “stunning” and “unparalleled.” And it deserves accolades like a record number of Academy Award nominations—10 in all.

Loosely autobiographical, *Roma* is director Orozco's ode to his Mexican childhood, his parents' divorce, and the indigenous housekeeper/nanny who lives with the family. Over the arc of one year (1970-71), their personal drama is laid bare.

The film is described as the story of, and a tribute to, the housekeeper Cleodégaria “Cleo” Gutiérrez (Yalitza Aparicio). She is meant to be the film's protagonist, and it is the events of her life the film focuses on—opening and closing with Cleo at the daily task of cleaning the floors from dog shit. In between, we witness what must be the most difficult 12 months of her life.

What gets lost in all the praise of *Roma*, however, is just how little this film is actually

about Cleo and how very much it is about the little-boy-turned-film-director. It is not a movie about women. It is a movie about a man and his romanticized memories of the women who raised him.

Each moment of *Roma* is built to highlight the aesthetic mastery of the male filmmaker and stoke the aesthetic pleasure of the male viewer. The camerawork, like the narrative, is voyeuristic throughout, and the women at its center are idealized versions of femininity and maternity in nearly-clichéd proportions. It is impossible to watch the movie and not be hyper-aware of Orozco's presence. In scene after scene, the overwhelming artistry of the movie is louder than any of the women at its center.

And that's my problem with the movie: While it purports to be a tribute to women, in reality it is a tribute to the male gaze.

We only get glimpses of Cleo outside the family's home and their employ, and those scenes provide very little insight. She's obtuse to the point where you begin wondering if she's daft. And that's because she is not the one telling us her story. We are not getting any closer than a voyeur. We

sit behind her in the movies. We stand next to her in a hospital. We giggle when she is intimate with her boyfriend. In every case, we get a child's view of grownup problems while spying from the doorway.

The film also takes a strongly masculine view of particularly female problems.

I don't want to reveal any spoilers, nor am I big on trigger warnings, but the climax of the film could genuinely be traumatic for women who aren't prepared to relive graphically and clinically the pain and complications of childbirth. Here, and elsewhere, what is meant to induce empathy merely feels spiteful.

And it's also a particularly masculine point of view when Cleo's employer struggles through her divorce, telling Cleo in a crucial scene, “We are alone. No matter what they tell you, we women are always alone.”

The problem with that line, and the amount of time *Roma* spends trying to prove it true, is that it only applies if a woman's life is dependent upon a man's presence in order to be whole. Cleo's life is far from empty, nor is she alone. We see friendship in snippets, we see her own family in snippets,

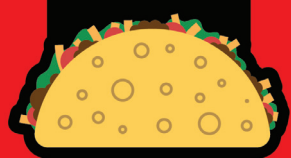
we see her contemplating the sky and life itself, but only in snippets. The film never gives us those moments as fully as the ones where men are doing the women wrong and the women are falling apart as a result.

Towards the end of *Roma*, one of the children asks Cleo if she's a mute. She talks so little in the film that it's a fair question. But it's also fair to ask if maybe her silence has more to do with a reluctance to share her innermost thoughts and feelings with the boss's kids than the tragic feminine stoicism Orozco alludes to. There is a grace and strength to Cleo barely visible beneath the umpteen layers of cinematic showing-off in *Roma* that hints at a whole person. That's the movie I'm still waiting to see.

Yes, Orozco's film is a cinematic masterpiece. But it's time to give women, particularly marginalized women, their own voice and let them tell their own stories. Cleo's muteness in *Roma* is less a narrative device than it is the ongoing silencing of women by male storytellers.

The result, albeit a masterpiece, is a textbook example of the male gaze and the inflated masculine ego behind it. ■

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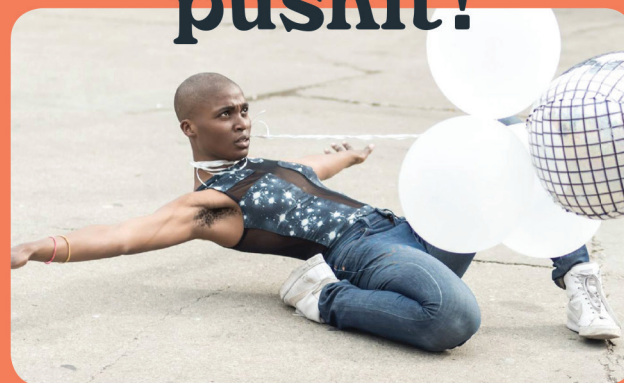


PHOTO BY: SARAH-HI RHEE

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PHOTO BY: ZENITH RICHARDS

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## Chaney Lively

### The First Woman of Color to Call Indianapolis Home

BY LAURA MCPHEE // LMCPHEE@NUVO.NET

ILLUSTRATIONS // T.J. REYNOLDS



Indianapolis was literally uncharted territory when chosen as the state capitol in 1820. With the exception of a few hardy settlers and a handful of Native Americans who refused to be chased off by the federal government, it was uninhabited wilderness.

A Scotsman named Alexander Ralston was hired as surveyor in 1821 and tasked with laying out the new city—a plan that became known as the Mile Square. He'd emigrated to the U.S. around 1790 and not long after was hired as an assistant to Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the architect responsible for laying out the city of Washington, D.C.

Ralston came to Indianapolis in early summer 1821. A lifelong bachelor with no known family, he came with a clerk and a housekeeper described as, “a mulatto woman named Chaney Lively.”

Chaney was 21-years-old when she arrived in the city. And though she was a free woman of color, that isn't how her relationship with Ralston began.

***“Nobody was rich, nobody was poor, nobody was upish, nobody servile. Nobody had relatives. Each family was solitary, and so dependent upon neighbors and neighborly good will.”***

— CATHARINE MERRILL

#### BORN A SLAVE

It's not clear where or when, but we know Ralston purchased Chaney as a slave. Most likely, he bought her in Louisville, a major slave trading hub at the time he lived there in the early 1800s.

Census records show Chaney was born in Kentucky in 1800, making her about 15 or 16 in the years just before Ralston left Louisville for the Indiana territory. And though slavery was outlawed by the new state constitution, that didn't stop settlers moving north from bringing their slaves with them when they came.

The term “free person of color” was high-

ly symbolic, and there were plenty of ways for whites to evade the law. Governor of the Indiana Territory and future President William Henry Harrison, for example, bought slaves in Kentucky and imported them as indentured servants.

The relationship between Ralston and Chaney began as slavery, but by the time they arrived in Indianapolis they lived and worked side-by-side in a manner that led others in the community to regard her as an important and respected member of his household.

Ralston worked on his survey of Indianapolis throughout the summer of 1821.

When the platted lots went for sale in October, he bought two lots on the first day: one for him and one expressly for Chaney.

One of those lots was on Maryland Street at the point where Kentucky used to cut the block diagonally. Here, he built a one-story brick house where he and Chaney lived until his death in January of 1827.

In part, the acceptance of Chaney had to do with the difficulties of frontier life. There wasn't much of a class system in Indianapolis in the early days; pioneering created a pretty level playing field.

As Catherine Merrill would later write in her autobiography, “Nobody was rich, nobody was poor, nobody was upish, nobody servile. Nobody had relatives. Each family was solitary, and so dependent upon neighbors and neighborly good will.”

In his 1870 history of the city of Indianapolis, J.B. Nowland writes about Chaney this way:

“She was a member of the first Presbyterian Church, and was universally

respected by the pioneer ladies of the place who often took tea with her. She always behaved herself with propriety, and never took advantage of the attention shown her by them to be in any ways saucy.”

Calvin Fletcher notes visits to Ralston and Chaney’s house in his 1821-22 diaries, for conversation and a cup of tea, and to see some new fruit in the garden. Fletcher’s wife Sarah notes visiting for a taste of sugar.

In her memoir, Jane Merrill Ketcham writes about lounging in the yard as a young girl and talking with Chaney as she skimmed the cream. Another Merrill daughter records a visit on a cold February morning in 1826 in her diary and finishes with, “I love Mr. Ralston and Chaney, too.”

### HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

Ralston’s death in January 1827 must have been terrifying for Chaney, no matter how much or little she grieved him personally, and no matter how nicely the townspeople treated her. She was a young woman of color alone in a frontier town, without family or means, and with very little power under the law.

While we don’t know the specifics, we do know Ralston made provisions for Chaney to legally own her own land and home after his death. As noted above, he bought two plots of land in 1821—and deeded one to “Chaney Lively, a free woman of color.”

That piece of land sits on the northwest corner of Meridian and Maryland Streets, and it is where Chaney lived from 1827 until the early 1850s.

In September 1871, *The Indianapolis News* published “A Glimpse of Meridian Street Thirty Years Ago” and described the area this way:

“There stood on or very near the same corner now occupied by [the Hard Rock Cafe], a little one story frame where Jerry Collins kept what was then called a grocery, and would now be called a ‘dogger’ or more softly, a saloon. Below Collin’s grocery, on the west side, there were two houses only, one on the alley [Pearl Street], the other on the corner of Maryland Street where ‘Aunt Chany,’ a very estimable colored woman, lived.”

When Chaney moved into her own home in 1827, there were less than 60 people of

color—men, women, and children—living in Indianapolis out of a population of a little more than 1,000. She was the only female head of household, and the first woman of color to own property in the city, most likely the first person of color, male or female, to do so.

To make a living after Ralston’s death, Chaney took in boarders. As construction



on the National Road got underway and labor camps sprung up nearby, she also made money by cooking and doing laundry for the workers—particularly African American laborers who were increasingly unwelcome in other parts of town.

After living on her own for nearly a decade, Chaney married one of those men in March 1836. In his diary entry that day, Calvin Fletcher notes that he heard of the wedding and made a special trip to Chaney’s house to offer the couple his best wishes.

### MR. AND MRS. BRITTON

There is little record of Chaney’s life outside her relationship to Ralston. In later years, she rarely made headlines. Fortunately, her new husband John Britton did make the papers, and his activities offer us glimpse of what her life was like in the 1840-50s.

Britton came from Ohio in 1835. He was

on to be the first African American member of the Indiana General Assembly.

When Frederick Douglass called the 1848 Colored National Convention to order in Cleveland on Wednesday, Sept. 6, 1848, John Britton was present as the delegate from Indiana.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, he spearheaded that same movement locally and advertised for others to join him.

“The time has come when every colored man in the State should consider his situation,” he writes July 3, 1851, in the *Indiana Sentinel*. “We think it is high time that we take into consideration the oppressive laws that have so long oppressed us...”

Britton wasn’t just fighting for an end to slavery, but for the rights of free people of color living in Indianapolis including his friends and family.

In the early days, “the attitude of the Negro was what it was generally in the free states at that time—one of tolerance to an inferior race,” wrote historian Jacob Piatt Dunn. “There was firm maintenance of the fact that Indiana was free soil, and protection of Negroes in the legal rights that this implied.”

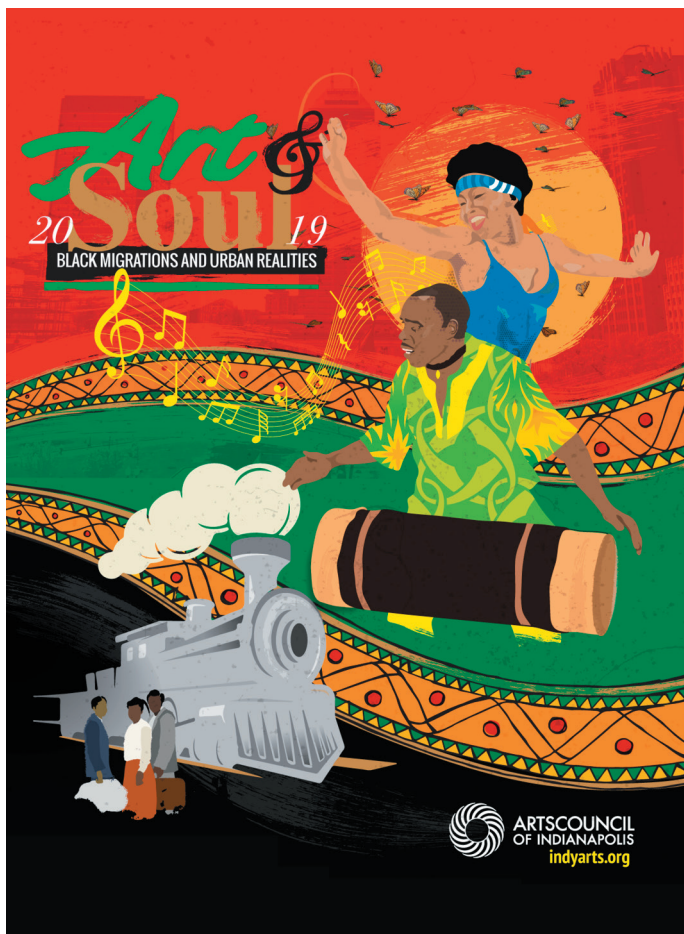
Twenty years later, however, those attitudes had grown less tolerant, even in Indianapolis where abolitionists like Calvin Fletcher championed (limited) rights for his “colored brethren.” The reality of day-to-day life for people of color in the city during the 1840s was becoming increasingly precarious.

### MOB RULE

On July 4, 1845, Chaney’s longtime neighbor John Tucker, a free man of color, was walking down Washington Street around 3 p.m. when he was beaten to death at the hands of a group of white men.

“An affray occurred in this city between a negro and some whites, in which the negro was finally killed outright,” wrote the *Indiana Sentinel* the next day. “The name of the negro is said to be John Tucker, about 45 years old, and previous to this incident he is said to have been of a quiet and inoffensive disposition.

“He was, we are told, formerly a slave in Kentucky, but many years ago honorably



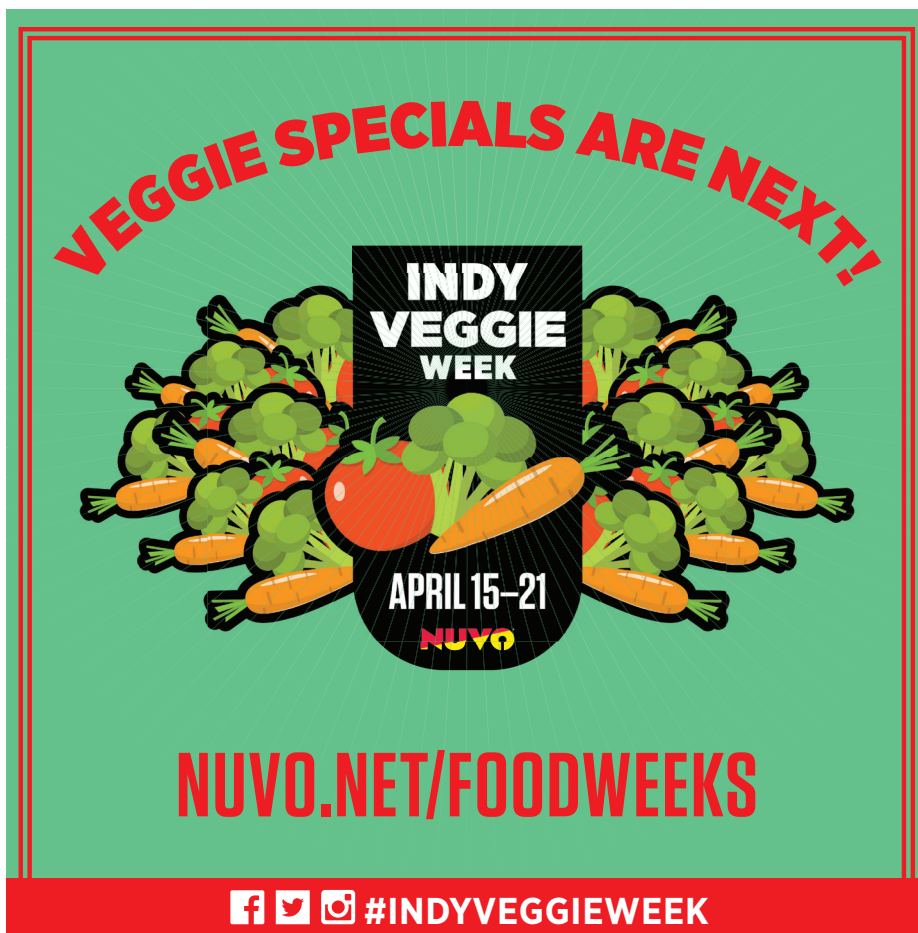
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*The Big Story Continued...*

obtained freedom, and come to this vicinity more than 15 years ago. He has left two children, a girl about 13, and a boy about 10 years old."

The paper published the proceedings of the trial against the men charged with killing Tucker, and the testimony of more than 15 witnesses who all told similar stories: Tucker was walking down the street, minding his own business when a white man by the name of Nick Woods came out of a grocery store. Whether accidental or on purpose, Woods bumped into Tucker, and words were exchanged.

Woods struck first, hitting Tucker in the face and bloodying his nose. A brawl ensued, Woods picked up a club, and a short chase ended near the corner of Washington and Illinois where a crowd formed and chants of "Kill the N—!" could be heard up and down the street.

Two men jumped in to help Woods in the fight: a white man named Edward Davis who picked up a brick and hit Tucker in the head, and a white man named William Ballinger who "ran after the negro, caught him by the collar, took the club and hit the negro over the head, and knocked him down. Woods then came to where the negro was lying and struck him twice over the head or shoulders. Someone then took away the club, and prevented further blows."

A careful examination by physicians revealed that "Tucker's skull was fractured the whole length. The blow which caused it would have felled an ox."

Ballinger skipped town before the trial. Davis was acquitted because they couldn't prove he delivered the fatal strike. Woods was charged and found guilty of manslaughter; he was sentenced to three years in the penitentiary.

***"She was a member of the first Presbyterian Church, and was universally respected by the pioneer ladies of the place who often took tea with her. She always behaved herself with propriety and never took advantage of the attention shown her by them to be in any ways saucy."***

— J.B. NOWLAND

Three other men, "local toughs," were charged initially for aiding, but never tried.

#### **RULE OF LAW**

It wasn't just mob rule making life hell for people of color in the years leading up to the Civil War, however.

In 1850, the federal government passed the Fugitive Slave Act that allowed for any person of color in the North to be arrested and held on nothing more evidentiary than the word of a white person who claimed the person of color was actually an escaped slave.

A friend of Chaney and John's was arrested in just such a case.

John Freeman came to Indianapolis a free man of color in 1844. Over the course of a decade, he established a successful painting company and earned a good deal of money, eventually owning four acres of land near Meridian and Michigan streets, as well as a restaurant on Washington Street. He was married with three children, a member of the First Presbyterian Church, and a Freemason when he was arrested on June 20, 1853.

Pleasant Ellington, a slaveholder and minister from St. Louis who was passing through town, claimed John Freeman was actually a fugitive slave named Sam who had run away nearly 20

years previously, when Ellington lived in Kentucky.

Freeman was arrested on nothing more than Ellington's word. He was held without bail for nine weeks as his lawyers worked to find witnesses who could disprove Ellington's claim—which they were eventually able to do. Three white men travelled from Georgia and Alabama prepared to testify they had known John Freeman as a youth, and he was not the man Ellington claimed.

Oddly enough, Pleasant Ellington skipped

town the night before Freeman's witnesses were set to testify. Freeman was released from jail and cleared of all charges. On Aug. 29, 1853, John Britton hosted a celebration at the Masonic Hall in Freeman's honor.

Even though he won his case, Freeman lost all his personal wealth as a result of the trial and ensuing legal fees, court costs, and fines. The community raised enough to help him keep his house, but within a few years he and his family moved to Canada.

#### NO NEGROES ALLOWED

Even those free persons of color in Indianapolis not accused of being fugitive slaves were at risk of losing whatever property and wealth they had acquired during this time, Chaney and her family included.

In 1851, the Indiana Constitution was changed to explicitly prohibit people of color from entering—a measure that remained in effect until 1866.

"No negro or mulatto shall come into or settle in the State, after the adoption of this Constitution," stated the amendment. "...any person who shall employ [a] negro or mulatto, or otherwise encourage him to remain in the State, shall be fined in sum not less than \$10, nor more than \$500."

Blacks already residing in Indiana were allowed to stay—provided they register with a county office. After paying a \$500 bond, each person of color was issued a "Certificate of Registration."

If a man or woman of color was found to be living in Indiana without these papers, they could be fined amounts set by local jurisdictions, up to \$1,000 for each infraction. "Negro Registries" from the time are available in the state archives.

It could be a complete coincidence that Chaney and John sold her house on Meridian Street the same year they were

required to register and pay this fee, but it probably isn't. Their daughter Eliza had recently married, and the young couple was expecting their first child. In all, Chaney's family would have been required to pay at least \$2,000 in order to remain in Indianapolis with any sense of security.

After selling the house she'd lived in since 1827, Chaney and her family moved to West Washington Street, "between the White River and West Street" according to the first City Directory.

It was a house big enough for Chaney and John, their daughter Eliza and her family, a few boarders, and a barber shop John ran from that address for decades. He still lived there when he died in 1885.

#### CHANNEY'S PASSING

In the mid-1850s, Calvin Fletcher founded the Old Settlers of Indianapolis and served as its first president. Each summer, a gathering of the city's earliest residents was held at the State Fairgrounds. More like a family reunion than convention, the meeting was a chance for old neighbors to catch up, old-timers to tell their stories, and old friends to see one another one last time.

The only record of Chaney's death located so far is a mention by Calvin Fletcher at the Old Settlers reunion in June 1858. As he called the meeting to order following a prayer, he began by reading a list of names of those who had passed since the group's meeting the previous year. Chaney Lively was among them.

Chaney would have been about 57 years old when she died in 1857-58 and a resident of Indianapolis for more than 35 years. Born into slavery, she arrived as a free person of color—the first to call Indianapolis home—and she died one of the city's oldest and most esteemed citizens. **N**

**Note:** Chaney Lively Britton was a wife, a mother, and a grandmother who today is the matriarch of a family that stretches from Queens to Los Angeles, without every losing its roots in Indianapolis. Constructing her family tree is a difficult process, one wrought with frustrations, but one I'm determined to complete. If you are into genealogy, local history, or think you might be related to Chaney Lively, feel free to reach out and help me complete the arduous and important task of tracing her descendants. We'll follow up with a story tracing Chaney's family history from the time she arrived in 1821 through today—just in time for the city's bicentennial.



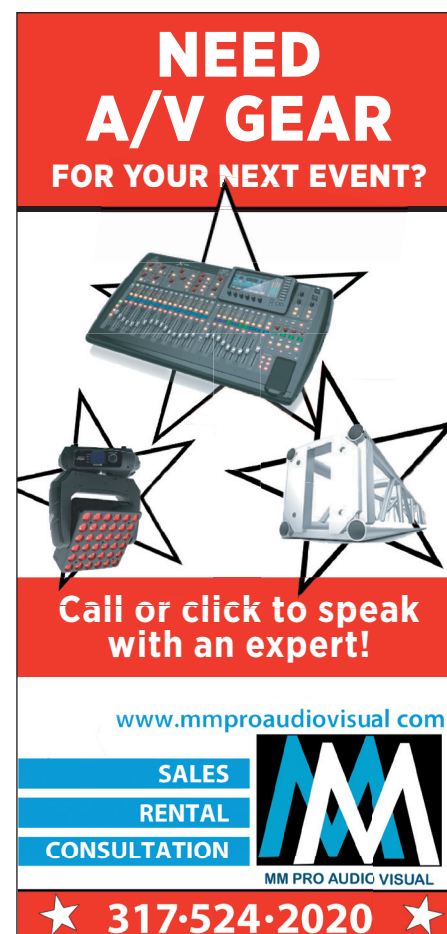
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4**

**EVENT** // Beck and Cage the Elephant w/ Spoon  
**WHERE** // Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center  
**TICKETS** // LiveNation.com

# ALLISON VICTORIA'S IRRESISTIBLE VOICE

*Singer is a Featured Artist at Art and Soul*

BY **SETH JOHNSON** // SJOHNSON@NUVO.NET

**T**here's no denying the magnetism of Allison Victoria's singing voice. This being said, it's somewhat surprising to hear the Indy soul artist didn't really start taking music seriously until recent years.

"I was in the church [growing up] and was always around music, but I was so shy and didn't really know how to attack it," Victoria says. "I was one of those singers that you really had to pull it out of. Like, 'Allison, really sing this time.'"

"Then in 2016, I got over sitting on this gift," she says of her musical talent. "I went to Vibe on Wednesday [a local open mic]. Once you go to one open mic in the city, you find a whole lot more. Genuinely, all you have to do is go to one, and you'll find the right people."

Now as part of this year's Art & Soul celebration, Victoria will be showcased as a featured artist, performing at the Indianapolis Artsgarden on Thursday at 12:15, Feb. 14 p.m. Put on every year by the Arts Council of Indianapolis, Art & Soul spotlights local African American artists via performances that take place throughout the month of February. Like previous installments, the 23rd annual Art & Soul is completely free and open to the public, with all events starting at 12:15 p.m. in the Artsgarden.

For as far back as she can remember, Victoria was surrounded by creative types. "My great uncle was a painter, and my great aunt played every instrument," she says. "It [creativity] just goes so far back." With this being said, she's been told her aura as an artist is similar to that of her godmother.

"She passed away before I could even

truly get to meet her, but my parents tell me all the time that I make music that's so similar to her vibe," Victoria says. "[They tell me] that my tone is so similar to hers and that how I compose resembles her. I feel like I remember her more musically, which is so powerful to me."

After going to a few open mics in the city, Victoria really got plugged in to Indy's music community, with help from people like multi-talented artist Tony Styxx. "Tony Styxx is the host of Vibe On Wednesday," she says. "He became a big brother and mentor as far as artistry goes." After only performing a few open mics, Victoria was granted an early opportunity to showcase her talent, performing at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Julia M. Carson Transit Center.

"Initially, the first person I ever performed with was Yadin Kol," she says. "That [ribbon-cutting ceremony] was actually our first professional gig that we got. Things literally took off from there."

Along the way, Victoria has also received help and support from several other notable figures in Indy's music community, including Diop, Mandog, Mariah Ivey, Milton Keys, and Willis. Since emerging on the scene in 2016, she has been booked by Doug Morris on several Old Soul Entertainment events as well.

"Doug Morris took me under his wing and truly put me on every event that might represent something I can bring to life," Victoria says. "He was like, 'Okay. We've got a Lauryn Hill tribute. Call Allison. Michael Jackson tribute? Call Allison.' He kept me busy."

Over time, Victoria has amassed a catalog of original work. Songs like "Beneath the Dust," "Let Go," "Sweet Love," and "The Cure" can be heard in the Small Studio Session she recorded with WFYI. Fans of Victoria can likely expect to hear some more recordings from the budding soul artist on the horizon as well, considering she has been approved for a Fourth Sunday studio session in 2019.

In addition to her own work, Victoria has also been featured on tracks with local

artists like Baby Ebony, Diop, James Daytona, Karte Carter, Willis, and Woogie, "Right now, I'm focused on giving people teasers by being featured on a lot of other people's projects that I truly believe in," she says. When it comes to her live sound, she now has a network of musicians that perform in her band.

"At this moment, I have such a huge musician family pot," Victoria says. "Whenever I have shows, I have all these people that are just there [to perform with me]. It's a blessing to be connected."

As for Art & Soul, she's excited to be one of the featured artists in 2019.

"I'm really honored because this event specifically sheds light on the beauty of Black history. To represent that and be able to have a platform is a blessing." ■

**WHAT** // Alison Victoria  
**WHEN** // Feb. 14, 12:15 p.m.  
**WHERE** // Artsgarden  
**TICKETS** // **FREE**



// PHOTO BY WILLIS



# JOSHUA THOMPSON'S CLASSICAL CALLING

*Classical Pianist is a Featured Artist At Art & Soul*

BY SETH JOHNSON // SJOHNSON@NUVO.NET

Joshua Thompson loved his cartoons growing up. Not for the reasons you'd think, however.

"I loved *Bugs Bunny* and *Tom & Jerry*—those were my favorite cartoons," says the classical pianist and Indianapolis native. "When I was 3 or 4 years old, I distinctly remember not paying so much attention to the cartoons themselves but the music behind them. It was fast, it was witty, and it was quick. At a young age, I just remember telling my parents, 'One day, I want to play for cartoons.'"

While he may have moved past his *Looney Tunes* phase, Thompson still has a love for orchestral music to this day. And while his brother Jared specializes in jazz, Joshua has gone down the classical music path, regularly performing around Indy at conventional and nonconventional venues. One of the featured artists at this year's Art & Soul celebration, Thompson will perform at the

Artsgarden at 12:15 p.m on Friday, Feb. 22.

At an early age, Thompson and his siblings were encouraged to play music. "From age 5 up until we left mom and dad's house to go to college, music was a central part of all our lives," Thompson says. "So all three of us children picked up piano at age 5. And then when each of us got to be 10 years old, we picked a different instrument."

While picking up the trumpet, Thompson continued forward with piano as well. Eventually, he and his brother Jared would hone their craft, each going down their own unique musical path.

"My brother's [passion] was jazz," Thompson says. "While he has a deep respect for classical music and classical musicians, it just wasn't his thing, and it's very much the same way for me and jazz. I respect the genre and the people who do it because it is complex in its own right. It

**WHAT** // Joshua Thompson  
**WHEN** // Feb. 22, 15:15 p.m.  
**WHERE** // Artsgarden  
**TICKETS** // **FREE**

just isn't my thing."

As he's pursued his classical music aspirations, Thompson has received help and support from several individuals along the way, including fellow DePauw University graduate Michael Mitchell, who is now an award-winning pianist, music director, and arranger. "We were very good friends while we were there [at DePauw]," Thompson says. "He kind of took me under his wing, as I was a few years younger. But as we've continued to grow into adulthood, he's a person I go to a lot." In addition to Mitchell, he's quite grateful for local organization Classical Music Indy and the opportunities

they've granted him.

"That was one of the first organizations that really gave me repeated opportunities to hone my craft as a performer and take the music where it needs to go, which is out into the community," Thompson says. "There are more places for us to go and perform that don't have to strictly be at the Hilbert Circle Theatre."

Overall, Thompson is excited to see classical music represented at more places around town. In particular, he mentions how classical music is featured on this year's Virginia Avenue Music Fest lineup.

"It's definitely gotten better [in recent years]," he says of classical music's representation in the city. "There are actually multiple places and platforms where you'll see classical music and the musicians who play it out and about. That goes for traditional settings and nontraditional settings."

When it comes to his own personal mission, Thompson strives to get more works from Black composers played regularly.

"A lot of people are unaware that Black people even composed and wrote classical music—let alone that you can actually know what their names are and the histories of these people," Thompson says.

"You can go around the country and see Mozart, Beethoven, Strauss, and Brahms on a program multiple times a year," he continues. "Until you see [composers like] William Grant Still, Margaret Bonds, and Robert Nathaniel Dett multiple times a year on programs in this city and around the nation, the need for what I'm doing is still there."

With this being said, his Art & Soul performance will feature pieces from William Grant Still, Duke Ellington, and more, as he presents a program that ties into the celebration's 2019 theme of "Black Migrations and Urban Realities."

"My program provides a classical music soundtrack to 'Black Migrations and Urban Realities,'" Thompson says. "While I do not follow it in chronological order, I follow this progression, this migration, and this existence as a Black person from its inception. And by inception, I mean this: Our history didn't start with slavery. It started well before then." ■

# SOUNDCHECK

BY **SETH JOHNSON**

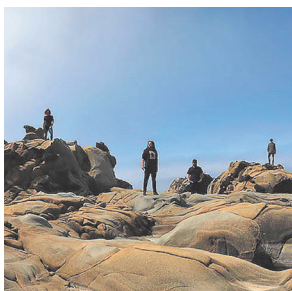


## THURSDAY // 02.14

### **Cher - Here We Go Again Tour**

Bankers Life Fieldhouse \$47.95 and up, all-ages

The Goddess of Pop ascends on Bankers Life Fieldhouse, blessing Indy with the sweetest of Valentine's Day treats. Fresh off the release of her ABBA covers album, *Dancing Queen*, Cher is bringing some new songs into the mix this tour, while surely keeping hits like "Believe" in play as well. The music legend has also enlisted disco royalty to open up for her, as Nile Rodgers and Chic will be kicking off the show.

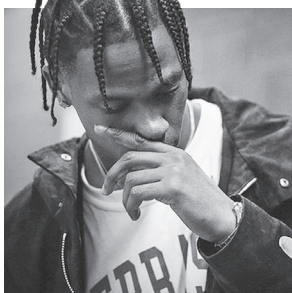


## SATURDAY // 02.16

### **Michael Menert & the Pretty Fantastics**

The Mousetrap \$10 - \$13, 21+

Born in Poland, Michael Menert worked alongside Pretty Lights early on, contributing to the electronic artist's initial success. The Northern California-based musician now makes what he refers to as "space jazz." Indy showgoers who aren't familiar with the group will be excited to see some friendly faces in the six-piece ensemble, including saxophonist Nick Gerlach and drummer/percussionist Richard "Sleepy" Floyd (both formerly of Turbo Suit).



## WEDNESDAY // 02.20

### **Travis Scott w/ Sheck Wes**

Bankers Life Fieldhouse \$29.95 and up, all-ages

On the heels of dropping one of 2018's hottest hip-hop releases, Travis Scott visits Indy on the second leg of his electrifying *Astrworld* tour, which has already received high praise from many for its ambitious stage setup. The energetic Houston emcee will receive opening support from 20-year-old rap sensation Sheck Wes—an artist best known for his massive, club-thumping hit "Mo Bamba."



## THURSDAY // 02.21

### **Kurt Vile & The Violators w/ The Sadies**

The Vogue \$25, 21+

After collaborating with Courtney Barnett on an album in 2017, Philadelphia indie-rock troubadour Kurt Vile returned in 2018 with his latest solo full-length, *Bottle It In*. Released through Matador Records, Vile's eighth full-length was recorded in several studios across the U.S. and features guest contributions from Kim Gordon, Cass McCombs, and more. Having collaborated with Vile on a 2016 track titled "It's Easy," longstanding Canadian rock quartet The Sadies will open up this show at the Vogue.



## TUESDAY // 02.26

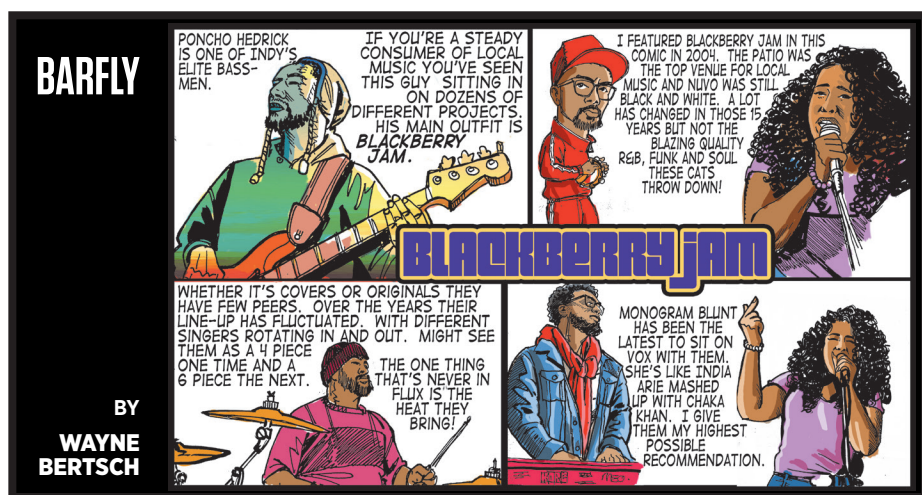
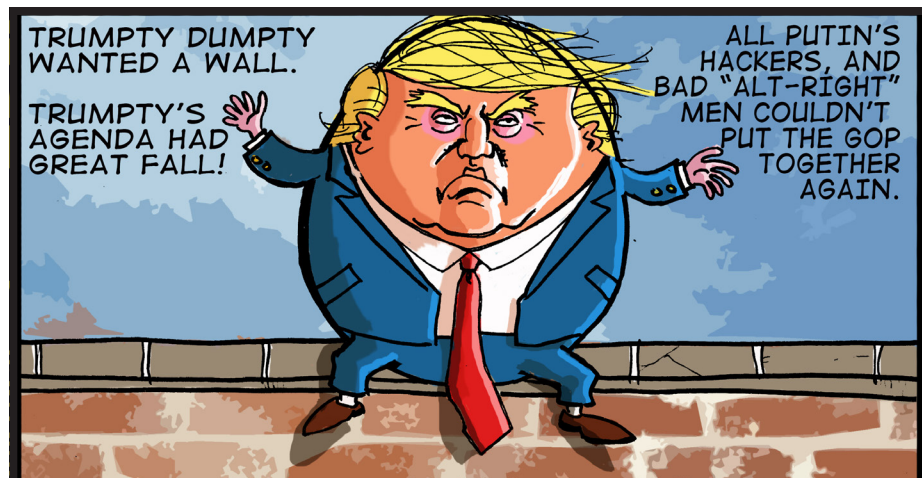
### **Kikagaku Moyo**

HI-FI \$15, 21+

Hailing from Tokyo, this Japanese psych band has a name that translates to "geometric patterns." Founded by Go Kurosawa (drums/vocals) and Tomo Katsurada (guitar/vocals) in 2012, Kikagaku Moyo's sharp sound explores elements of Krautrock, Indian ragas, and acid folk. With their visit to HI-FI, the five-piece group is out in support of 2018's *Masana Temples*.

## GADFLY

BY **WAYNE BERTSCH**



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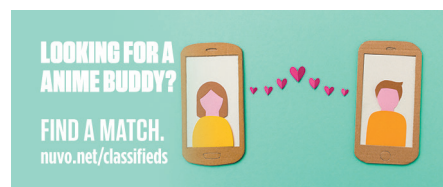


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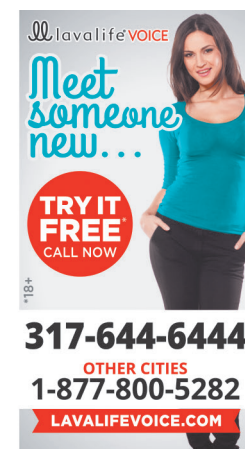
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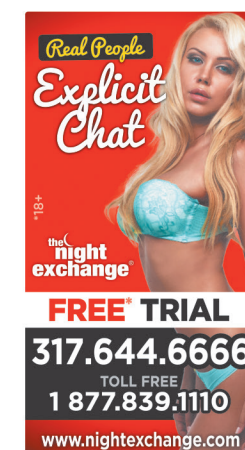
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—Boo

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Roses are Red, Pit—Bulls are  
Bad You're the sweetest "Dark"  
chocolate, That I've ever had!

—Mr. Brown J

**David the Winter King,**  
I love you so much and I am so  
happy that you and your family  
are in my life. Thanks for being  
so kind and generous.

—Janet

**Dan F,**  
Thank u 4 the adventure & fun.  
From sledding in the winter 2  
sitting on summer patios chasing  
the sun. Whatever season, warm  
or freezin, from Indy to the Cali  
Coast...I love U most

—Virg

**James Hightshue,**  
My handsome husband,  
Happy Valentine's Day! You are  
an amazing husband and father.  
Thank you for always putting  
God and your family first and  
making sure that we are taken  
care of. You are the best!

—Love Always,  
Your Wife Kristi Hightshue

**My dearest Randy,**  
Wow how wonderful it is to fall  
in love with your best friend.  
Thank you for showing me what  
true love is all about, being the  
best husband/soul mate but  
most importantly loving me  
Forever and Always I love you!!

—Love, Barbara

**Ash,**  
Happy Valentines Day! I'm so  
excited to spend another holiday  
with our family. You make every  
day better, and I'm so glad we  
can share our lives together.

—Love, Rob

**My sweet cat Lou,**  
You may wake me up every  
morning at unnecessary times.  
You may do some other pretty  
silly stuff too. But at the end of  
the day, I love you my pal. Keep  
being the greatest cat out there.  
You'd make Lou Reed proud.  
Stay vicious. Love,

— Seth

**Peanut,**  
Every day for the past year I  
have woken up feeling like the  
luckiest person in the world be-  
cause you're by my side. Happy  
Valentines Day, baby. I love you  
forever. FOR ALL ETERNITY.

— Pookie

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